

March 8, 2013

Chairman Mary Nichols
California Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comments on the Development of an Investment Plan for the Cap and Trade Program Auction Proceeds

Dear Chairman Nichols,

The Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) urges the Brown administration to develop an Investment Plan for the AB 32 Climate Change Program - Cap and Trade auction proceeds that invests in watershed protection and natural resources conservation. Healthy intact watersheds with natural land cover and soil resources provide vast carbon storage capabilities that offset greenhouse gas emissions and provide many ecosystem services that are necessary for our social and economic well-being including air filtration, carbon storage, nutrient cycling, water filtration and storage, soil formation, recreation, food and timber.

Watershed protection is vital to creating a resilient, healthy water supply, preserving carbon sinks, in protecting wetland corridors and other natural features, reducing agricultural and residential water use and thus energy use, in avoiding soil loss (thus creating carbon sinks), providing habitat for California's wildlife and building the natural and rural character of California, and in building wide spread support and networks for GHG reduction. SRWP brings together dozens of groups and thousands of people, concerned about the health of the Sacramento River and its watershed and provides a network for building a basin-wide context to improve watershed health. A well managed watershed can significantly increase rates of carbon sequestration as well as reduce emission of greenhouse gases by minimizing catastrophic fire and making use of the massive carbon sink that forested watersheds provide the state. As one of the largest watersheds in the United States, the Sacramento River watershed serves as an important source of drinking water and recreation as well as a vital economic artery for commerce and agriculture. Therefore, preserving and maintaining its natural resources is crucial to meeting the overarching goals identified in AB 32.

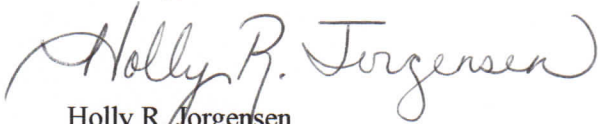
AB 32 recognizes the need to tie greenhouse gas reduction actions to job creation. The wide participation of many natural resources management sectors with job creation efforts will be a necessity to maintain public support and acceptance for the investment needed to realize carbon reduction objectives. AB 1532 establishes the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and recognizes that carbon reduction will need to engage broad participation from diverse sectors in watershed preservation and natural resources conservation. It is important to recognize that non-profits, conservation service organizations, and local agencies need to participate in this effort.

Existing watershed protection and natural resource conservation programs, such as those operated by the Strategic Growth Council, California Conservation Corps, Department of Conservation, and state conservancies, are staffed but facing declining and expended bond act funds which should be replenished to prevent the wide-scale elimination of the effective and popular state grant programs. SRWP strongly recommends the support of the Statewide Watershed Program and the Resource Conservation District Assistance Program both housed in the Department of Conservation. These programs support watershed protection and natural resource conservation projects implemented in coordination with landowners within targeted watersheds in the state. The program funds watershed coordinators and on-the-ground watershed management activities that provide tangible and significant natural resource conservation benefits. It can be scaled up to target projects statewide to reduce GHG emissions and sequester carbon.

Investing in watershed protection and natural resource conservation will provide multiple benefits to the State of California by providing both direct greenhouse gas reduction and secondary benefits especially in the Sacramento River watershed that is home to some of our most disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for considering our input into this process. We look forward to an improved investment plan in May.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly R. Jorgensen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Holly R. Jorgensen
SACRAMENTO RIVER WATERSHED PROGRAM